

Dr. Jon Cowans
Class meets: MW 4-5:20

jonco58@aol.com

FILM AND HISTORY: 21:510:301 Sec. 01 (Fall 2020) index 17096

This course examines how historical films present history, focusing mainly on American feature films. It seeks less to list these films' inaccuracies than to identify and analyze how and why they have mythologized the past. By learning to spot films' ideologies, assumptions, strategies, and visions of the past, one can identify the evolution of modern societies' historical mythologies, values, and beliefs.

The course seeks to build skills of reading comprehension and retention and critical thinking as well as the ability to analyze critically how films work.

GRADING

Students may not collaborate with each other on any quiz or exam. Students are bound by the university's academic integrity policy, which appears here: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/office-dean-student-affairs/academic-integrity-policy>.

ONLINE SESSIONS

We will hold online sessions on Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4pm to 5:20pm.

READINGS & FILMS

The readings are posted under Assignments on Blackboard. There are also links to most of the films on Blackboard. You are advised to print out the readings so you can underline them and make margin notes. The readings contain the answers to the quizzes and the exam questions.

TESTS: There will be an open-book take-home midterm at 4pm on Mon. Oct. 14 and an open-book take-home final exam on Wed. Dec. 16, 3-6pm. The format for these tests will be a series of short essays (1/2 to 1 page). Exam instructions will be distributed by email before each exam.

LECTURE QUESTIONS: After each session, you must email me one or two brief questions or comments on the material covered in that session. Grades are based on the number of sessions when you complete this assignment; each time missed will lower this grade by five points. All questions and/or comments must be in within 2 hours of the end of the session.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Everyone is required to participate regularly in class discussions on Zoom, either by asking questions or by making relevant comments. Grading is based on how often you speak in the online sessions and on how well your comments or questions show your comprehension of the day's readings and ability to analyze the course material. Please raise your hand in order for me to call on you.

READING QUIZZES: The quizzes are posted under Assignments on Blackboard. You will turn in a total of eight quizzes: four done before the midterm and four done after the midterm. You may choose which eight sessions you wish to submit quizzes for. The quizzes must be turned in by 6pm, and late quizzes will not be accepted.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Lecture questions	5%
Class participation	5%
Quizzes	15%
Midterm	35%
Final exam	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Wed. 9-2: Introduction

Tue. 9-8: Film and History [NOTE: We meet on Tuesday this week because of Labor Day.]

"Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood" (R-1)

"The Pedant Goes to Hollywood: The Role of the Academic Consultant" (R-2)

"Historical Authenticity in *A Man Called Horse*" (R-3)

Clip: *Braveheart* (1995)

Wed. 9-9: Rome, Session 1

"Oppositions, Anxieties, and Ambiguities in the Toga Movie" (R-4)

Clips: *Sign of the Cross* (1932); *Quo Vadis?* (1951)

Mon. 9-14: Rome, Session 2

"The Roman Empire in American Cinema after 1945" (R-5)

Film: *Ben-Hur* (1959)

Wed. 9-16: Rome, Session 3

"Spartacus: Testing the Strength of the Body Politic" (R-6)

Clips: *Spartacus* (1960)

Mon. 9-21: Rome, Session 4

"*Gladiator* and Contemporary American Society" (R-7)

"Gladiators and Blood Sport" (R-8)

"*Gladiator* in Historical Perspective" (R-9)

Film: *Gladiator* (2000)

Wed. 9-23: The Middle Ages, Session 1

"The Birth of Modern Medievalism in England and America" (R-10)

"The Holy Grail of Hollywood: King Arthur Films" (R-11)

Film: *First Knight* (1995)

Mon. 9-28: The Middle Ages, Session 2

"*Kingdom of Heaven* and the Multi-Temporality of Medieval Film" (R-12)

Film: *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005)

Wed. 9-30: British Royalty, Session 1

"The Monarchy and Film" (R-13)

"A Tyrant for All Seasons" (R-14)

Clips: *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933); *A Man for All Seasons* (1966)

Mon. 10-5: British Royalty, Session 2

"The Royal Bio-pic in the 1990s" (R-15)

"Queen and Country: *Elizabeth*" (R-16)

Film: *Elizabeth* (1998)

Wed. 10-7: Revolution

"The Perils of Revolution" (R-17)

Clips: *A Tale of Two Cities* (1935); *Viva Villa!* (1934)

Mon. 10-12: Review Session

Wed. 10-14: Midterm (take-home, distributed via email)

Mon. 10-19: Westerns, Session 1

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (R-18)

Henry Nash Smith, "The American West as Symbol and Myth" (R-19)

"The Frontier Myth" (R-20)

Clips: *Stagecoach* (1939)

Wed. 10-21: Westerns, Session 2

"The Western Is American History, 1939-1941" (R-21)

"Criminals as Heroes" (R-22)

Film: *Jesse James* (1939)

Mon. 10-26: Westerns, Session 3

"Killer Elite: The Cult of the Gunfighter" (R-23)

Film: *High Noon* (1952)

Wed. 10-28: Westerns, Session 4

"Women in Western Films" (R-24)

"The Woman in the Western" (R-25)

Film: *Shane* (1953)

Mon. 11-2: Westerns, Session 5

"The Main Critical Issues in *The Searchers*" (R-26)

"Captivity, Purity, and Feminine Values in *The Searchers*" (R-27)

"Native American Reactions to *The Searchers*" (R-28)

Film: *The Searchers* (1956)

Wed. 11-4: The American South, Session 1

"The Growth of a Mythology: The South in Film" (R-29)

"War Comes to Tara" (R-30)

Clips: *Gone with the Wind* (1939)

Mon. 11-9: The American South, Session 2

"Slavery and the South in Silent Film" (R-31)

"Hollywood's Inscription of Slavery" (R-32)

Clips: *Band of Angels* (1957); *Mandingo* (1975)

Wed. 11-11: The American South, Session 3

"Hollywood and the Reinterpretation of the South" (R-33)

"*Mississippi Burning*" (R-34)

Film: *Mississippi Burning* (1988)

Mon. 11-16: War Films, Session 1

"The Western and the War Film, 1940-1945" (R-35)

Film: *Bataan* (1943)

Wed. 11-18: War Films, Session 2

"*Patton*" (R-36)

Clips: *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946); *Patton* (1970); *Catch-22* (1970)

Mon. 11-23: War Films, Session 3

"Vietnam at the Movies" (R-37)

Film: *Coming Home* (1978)

THANKSGIVING

Mon. 11-30: War Films, Session 4

Reviews of *The Deer Hunter* (R-38)

Clips: *The Deer Hunter* (1978)

Wed. 12-2: War Films, Session 5

Reviews of *Platoon* (R-39)

Clips: *Rambo II* (1985)

Film: *Platoon* (1986)

Mon. 12-7: War Films, Session 6

"The Myth of the Good War" (R-40)

"Realism, Historical Truth, and the War Film" (R-41)

Film: *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)

Wed. 12-9: Review Session

Wed. 12-16: Final Exam, 3 to 6pm (take home, distributed via email)

	Assigned Film Schedule		
	Swank	Amazon Rent	Youtube
Mon. 9-14: Ben-Hur, 1959 (3:32)	yes	\$4	\$3
optional Wed. 9-16: Spartacus, 1960 (3:04)	yes	\$4	\$3
Mon. 9-21: Gladiator (2:35)	yes	\$4	\$3
Wed. 9-23: First Knight (2:14)	yes	\$4	\$3
Mon. 9-28: Kingdom of Heaven, 2005 (2:24)	NO	\$4	\$3 (or free)
optional: Wed. 9-30: A Man for All Seasons, 1966	yes	\$4	\$3
Mon. 10-5: Elizabeth, 1998 (2:00)	yes	\$4	\$3
Wed. 10-21: Jesse James, 1939(1:47)	NO	\$4	\$3 (or free)
Mon. 10-26: High Noon (1:25)	yes	\$4	\$3
Wed. 10-28: Shane (1:58)	yes	\$4	\$3
Mon. 11-2: The Searchers (1:59)	yes	\$4	\$3
optional: Wed. 11-4: Gone with the Wind (3:37)	yes	\$4	\$3
Wed. 11-11: Mississippi Burning (2:05)	yes	NO (on Prime)	NO
Mon. 11-16: Bataan (1:53)	yes	\$3	\$3
Mon. 11-23: Coming Home, 1978 (2:06)	yes	NO	NO
optional: Mon. 11-30: The Deer Hunter (3:03)	yes	NO	\$4
Wed. 12-2: Platoon (2:00)	yes	\$4	\$3
Mon. 12-7: Saving Private Ryan (2:50)	yes	\$4	\$3

DANA library also owns most of these films on DVD.

Be sure to check the year of release as there may be other films with these titles. If you are unsure, ask me.

Try to avoid directors' cuts so that we are watching the same films.

Try to watch the optional films – at least part of them. Knowing them will help you on the midterm and final.

The Writing Center will have remote tutoring available: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>

Here is the link to the MyRun Student Resources page, <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid19>

Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a **confidential resource** and does **not** have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.